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Energy statistics

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report, which was prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2017/228 and past practices, provides updated information on work carried out to implement the decisions of the Statistical Commission on energy statistics, including work related to the development and implementation of international methodological documents on energy statistics, as well as new developments and challenges. The activities involving increased cooperation and coordination among agencies and countries working on energy statistics are also described.

The Commission is invited to take note of the report.

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I. Work carried out since the forty-fifth session of the Statistical Commission

1. The Statistical Commission most recently considered issues in the field of energy statistics at its forty-fifth session, held in 2014, its forty-third session, held in 2012 (see E/CN.3/2012/10) and its forty-second session, held in 2011 (see E/CN.3/2011/8 and E/CN.3/2011/9).

2. Section II of the present report contains a description of activities undertaken in response to the decisions of the Commission since its forty-fifth session.

II. Activities carried out in response to the decisions of the Commission

A. Methodology

3. After the Commission had adopted the International Recommendations for Energy Statistics at its forty-second session, they underwent a final review to ensure consistency and were prepared for publication. At the time of writing, they have not yet been published; they can be accessed, however, on the Energy Statistics Section of website of the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat.[1]

4. Owing to budgetary constraints, the International Recommendations for Energy Statistics are not scheduled for internal translation into the other five official languages of the United Nations. The Division is therefore coordinating with potential outside partners to have them translated.

5. The Division has completed its work on the Energy Statistics Compilers Manual, with substantial input having been provided by the Oslo Group on Energy Statistics. At the time of writing, the Manual has not yet been published; a draft version is available from the Energy Statistics Section of the Division website. The Division is committed to finding alternative ways to produce translated versions of the Manual with assistance from outside partners.

6. In addition to providing written guidance on these methodological publications, the Industrial and Energy Statistics Section of the Division is working on the development of online training courses on the International Recommendations for Energy Statistics and the Manual and expects to complete the first set of courses in 2018.

B. Natural gas statistics

7. In decision 43/107, adopted at its forty-third session (see E/2012/24), the Commission endorsed proposed activities related to natural gas statistics, specifically the development of detailed methodological guidance, the conduct of training activities and the establishment of a worldwide database on monthly natural gas statistics.

[1] See https://unstats.un.org/UNSD/energy/ires/default.htm.

8. The activities were carried out as part of the work of the Joint Organisations Data Initiative, which comprises the following organizations: Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), Eurostat, Gas Exporting Countries Forum, International Energy Agency, Latin American Energy Organization, Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the Statistics Division and the International Energy Forum (IEF).

9. The preparation of a manual on natural gas as part of the Joint Organisations Data Initiative was led by the Division, in close cooperation with the International Energy Forum and the other Initiative partners. The primary objective of the manual is to help professionals who collect and use natural gas data to understand the methodology and definitions in the questionnaire on natural gas prepared by the Initiative, conduct basic verification of data, avoid common reporting errors and share examples of good practices.

10. The Joint Organisations Data Initiative database on natural gas currently covers information on 12 basic data items of monthly gas statistics for 87 countries, compiled by the Initiative's partner agencies. Efforts are under way to increase the coverage in the database.

11. In addition to the database, most of the Initiative's organizations include selected gas statistics data items in their existing annual and monthly data collections and databases.

12. Since the forty-fifth session of the Commission, the International Energy Agency has organized six training workshops on monthly data collections for natural gas statistics, to which partner agencies of the Initiative have contributed. In addition, the organizations have conducted workshops related to their individual work programmes, including with regard to natural gas statistics.

C. Oslo Group on Energy Statistics

13. In decision 37/108, adopted at its thirty-seventh session (see E/2006/24), the Commission supported the establishment and mandate of the Oslo Group on Energy Statistics (https://unstats.un.org/oslogroup) as a city group that would address methodological issues related to energy statistics and contribute to improved international standards and improved methods for official energy statistics.

14. After having assisted in developing the International Recommendations on Energy Statistics and the Energy Statistics Compilers Manual, the Oslo Group identified a number of new work areas in an updated work plan that was submitted to the Commission at its forty-fifth session. The Group has met twice since the forty-fifth session to discuss components of the new work plan under the guidance of Statistics Finland as the new chair of the Group.

15. The 10th meeting of the Oslo Group was held from 10 to 13 May 2016 in Aguascalientes, Mexico. At the meeting, the Group focused on the new work areas, for which initial working groups had been established to address energy prices, the use of administrative data sources for energy data collection and validation, the use of electronic data collection and statistical data and metadata exchange, energy data dissemination practices and quality reviews of energy data.

16. The working group on energy data dissemination practices presented country practices and the agreed to continue to work in this area, which was of interest to many Oslo Group members. The group discussed how to disseminate statistics to rural

areas in order to motivate potential respondents to answer questionnaires. The area was seen also as important topic to be covered by future country practices.

17. It was also proposed at the meeting that geospatial information be a new topic for the Oslo Group. This was seen as a positive step that should be explored further, although many countries may have restrictions with regard to publishing geospatial information, often as a result of confidentiality concerns. It was agreed that a separate mandate, workplan and timeline for a working group on the topic would be developed, starting with a feasibility study.

18. The working group on the use of electronic data collection and statistical data and metadata exchange updated the Oslo Group on international work aimed at developing exchange standards to harmonize data reporting. The agencies involved agreed to share draft data structure definitions for energy statistics, and the Oslo Group offered to identify pilot countries the testing phase conducted by the organizations.

19. The working group on the use of administrative data sources for energy data collection and validation noted that the use of administrative data had been highly prioritized in most countries; it also noted, however that its limitations (such as differing terminology and possible data quality concerns) needed to be considered. It determined that, as a possible output, the Oslo Group could prepare a separate report that provided a list of country practices related to the topic, emphasizing also the role of the legislation in statistical activity. Without the proper legislation, if could be difficult to use of administrative data. The experiences of a few countries with electricity data hubs were reviewed and possible applications were discussed.

20. The working group on quality reviews of energy data presented existing guidelines and practices for data quality reporting, and the Oslo Group agreed to focus its work in this area on three projects: promoting the sharing of country practices to ensure data quality; serving as a clearinghouse for information on data quality tools and practices; and defining the minimum steps necessary to ensure quality standards in energy statistics.

21. The Oslo Group agreed to focus only on two working groups in the near future: one on administrative data sources and the other on energy data dissemination. The other working groups would still exist but not be the current focus of the Group, although the focus could change in the future.

22. The 11th meeting of the Oslo Group was held from 8 to 11 May in Stockholm. As agreed at the previous meeting, the Group primarily considered the work in the areas of administrative data sources and energy data dissemination.

23. With regard to administrative data sources, the working group presented a number of country practices. It was decided that a clear workflow needed to be identified since different countries faced entirely different situations. Some, for example, have advanced legislation covering the use of administrative data while others do not. Legislation was determined to be a key issue with regard to ensuring the accessibility of administrative data for statistical purposes.

24. Digitalization was another key element discussed. Digitalization adds significant value to questionnaires, for example, with regard to customizing the form on the basis of the receiver's characteristics. However, converting traditional paper forms to Excel or another similar format was not considered to be a reasonable utilization of digitalization. It was noted that, with digitalization, there was a need for

solid classifications and unchanging methods, which need to be balanced in the context of an increasingly changing society.

25. It was also noted that there were sources that provided real-time data (daily, hourly or minute-by-minute). The key discussion in this regard focused on whether to choose that data for producing official statistics.

26. The working group on energy data dissemination practices presented a number of practices undertaken by international and regional organizations, as well as by individual countries.

27. It was stressed that social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) played an important role in the dissemination of statistics today and that the expertise (or lack thereof) of the audience in this regard had to be taken into account in such communication contexts.

28. The presentations included new visualizations of energy flows and short videos in which the basic concepts of energy were explained. The presentations were considered to be very useful, in particular to non-expert users of statistics. Participants expressed a strong interest in using the concepts presented in the videos and of exploring them further.

29. Discussions among the other working groups highlighted an interest in having the members of Oslo Group be more involved in work related to the Sustainable Development Goals (especially Goal 7, on energy) and to the statistical data and metadata exchange. However, procedural issues would have to be clarified in order to ensure efficient involvement of the Group.

30. In the discussions on the way forward for the Group, a number of issues were raised, including:

- Was there a need to update the International Recommendations for Energy Statistics, or to consider only minor updates concerning mainly the classifications of renewables? If yes, how could this be organized?
- Should the Oslo Group write a short methodology paper on how to calculate the Goal 7 indicators?
- How could the work on statistical data and metadata exchange be organized between the Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics, the Oslo Group and others, with the Oslo Group focusing on testing and experience-sharing with regard to the exchange?
- Inviting more countries to collaborate on the datahub paper to share experiences.
- In addition to administrative data sources, countries were also looking for alternative data sources (e.g., determining solar panel capacity from satellite pictures). The Oslo Group could be the right platform for sharing such country practices.
- The Group should focus more on user segmentation as a key area of dissemination practices.

D. Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics

31. In decision 37/108 the Commission supported the establishment of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics (http://www.interenerstat.org/) to

enhance international collaboration and coordination in the field of energy statistics and to harmonize definitions among organizations (see E/2006/24).

32. The Intersecretariat Working Group has met twice since the forty-fifth session of the Commission to discuss a range of issues that require coordination among international and regional agencies involved in the production of energy statistics.

33. The 2015 meeting of the Intersecretariat Working Group was held in Paris on 14 and 15 September.

34. Participants at the meeting considered cross-cutting issues on energy statistics, including the coordination of international efforts carried out by groups such as the Oslo Group and the processes leading to the identification of indicators in the Sustainable Development Goal framework, and agreed on steps to improve the exchange of information on these issues.

35. Participants reviewed the state and progress made in the development of manuals and similar guidance for energy statistics. They also provided feedback on finalizing the International Recommendations for Energy Statistics and the ongoing work regarding the Energy Statistics Compilers Manual, as well as on manuals related to specific issues produced by other organizations, such as the manual of the International Renewable Energy Agency on bioenergy data collection and estimation methods, and the manuals of the International Energy Agency manuals on energy efficiency. All participants stressed the need for the manuals to be translated.

36. The classifications used in energy statistics, including the Standard International Energy Product Classification and its relation to other developing classifications (such as the Forest Products Classification and Definitions) and existing classifications (such as the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System) were discussed with a view to identifying possible improvements that would have to made in the near or mid-term to make the Standard International Energy Product Classification more responsive to developing data needs and other data sources. The issue was also highlighted in discussions held on data needs with regard to renewable energy.

37. Training and capacity-building activities by the attending organizations were discussed with a focus on ways to share training materials, schedules were explored with a view to increasing the efficiency and reach of the capacity-building activities. Subsequent training activities have already shown demonstrated better coordination among the organizations.

38. Participants reviewed existing practices in the construction of energy balances and agreed to develop documentation that would clarify current deviations from the recommended balance structure and methodology set out in the International Recommendations for Energy Statistics. This would not only improve the transparency of the process of constructing these valuable analytical tools but would also form the basis for updating the methodology in future reviews of the Recommendations.

39. Energy efficiency was recognized as an emerging topic that created a high demand for data, especially at a detailed level. Participants agreed to focus on this issue at a future meeting of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics.

40. Participants also discussed data originality, which might impact the quality of energy data produced, in particular data on renewable energy. Source and quality information would be shared. A process to review the actual data flow for a specific, but crucial subset of renewable energy products was initiated among key agencies,

including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Energy Agency (IEA), the International Renewable Energy Agency and the Statistics Division. This work led to subsequent discussions among these agencies on biomass data.

41. The 2016 meeting of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Energy Statistics was held in Paris on 13 and 14 December. Following the recommendation made at the 2015 meeting of the Intersecretariat Working Group, the focus of the meeting was on energy efficiency and the required end-use data, drawing in experts from additional institutions. the meeting was attended by representatives of 12 international and regional organizations, and representatives of 11 additional entities involved in energy statistics or policy attended an extended session dedicated to energy efficiency and energy end-use data.

42. In the special session on energy efficiency and end-use data, a number of future common work areas were identified, including how to better disseminate energy efficiency data and the importance of policy monitoring to policymakers, as well as to the public and businesses; joint work on capacity- building for energy statisticians and those responsible for data activity (e.g., ministry of transport or industry associations); increased sharing of information on country organization methodology and current work, in order to avoid duplication of work and harmonize approaches to common difficulties; and the importance of building links at the national level between agencies producing end-use data and those producing energy balance information in order to improve the consistency of data.

43. Participants noted that the need for more timely data for policymakers often posed a challenge owing to the long process required for collecting end-use data. It was recognized that appropriate funding was to establish timely and sufficiently detailed end-use data collection.

44. A key conclusion reached at the meeting was the need to work with entities that were active outside the energy statistics domain, such as academia, in order to raise awareness about the difficulties associated with data collection and to include institutions such as ministries of transport or industry associations as potential participants at capacity-building events since activity data are often provided by a variety of institutions.

45. Some methodological issues, such as the potential use of big data and estimations of missing data points were also discussed from country perspectives during the special session.

46. It was noted in discussions on the implementation of the International Recommendations for Energy Statistics, held during the general part of the meeting, that many countries considered the Recommendations to be less authoritative unless they were produced in hard copy, despite the fact that agreement had been reached in 2011 not to produce them in that format. As a result, countries might not yet be able to implement necessary changes. It was agreed, however, to explore the impact that this was having on countries by conducting a short survey.

47. Participants also agreed that it was sensible to start the process of assessing the need to review the Recommendations. They noted that there had been developments in the energy world that might mean a scope for change in that regard or a need to update the Manual or provide supporting documents.

48. Participants agreed to discuss the issue with their member States and to produce a note on what changes they thought were needed with regard to the

Recommendations, including respective benefits. The information would be discussed at the next meeting of the Intersecretariat Working Group, at which a decision on a formal update or other action would be taken.

49. Eurostat and IEA gave an introduction to work in the statistical data and metadata exchange on energy statistics, which was of great value to participants, given the mixed understanding, limited knowledge or lack of knowledge shown by countries to date. Members saw the benefit in trying to achieve a global data structure definitions standard, but recognized the different challenges organizations faced with their members. IEA and Eurostat were working on a draft data structure definition that would be circulated once initial testing had been completed.

50. The next I meeting of the Intersecretariat Working Group is expected to be held in the fall of 2018.

E. Ongoing activities in the energy statistics work programme of the International Energy Agency

51. The International Energy Agency remained at the centre of work on energy statistics, through its leadership of the Intersecretariat Working Group, its bilateral work with all partner organizations and its own work. In the past two years, the IEA modernization programme has given an opportunity to countries to become associated with it. These countries have expressed a keen interest in seeking assistance from IEA in improving their energy data. This, in turn, has improved links with partners such as the Statistics Division and APEC with regard to enhancing cooperation in training and in reaching out to new forms of education on energy statistics, such as the webinars and videos launched in 2016 and the translations of manuals. On its own, or in cooperation with partner countries, IEA has trained 1,000 energy statisticians over the past two years. In addition to partner countries, IEA has been working with African countries through the African Energy Commission in delivering a number of training courses and helping them to establish a simplified data collection process for energy end-use.

52. This development has been driven by changes in the energy situation globally. To respond to this, IEA has adapted its outputs, combining data on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and non-OECD data into global publications, developing new data on energy efficiency and supporting the work on implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically targets 7.2 and 7.3. At the global level, IEA has achieved agreement on the terms of reference for the Group of 20 energy end-use and efficiency programme and is working on conducting the first workshop on this issue in 2018, under the presidency of Argentina. IEA has also continued to support the Joint Organizations Data Initiative both by working with member organizations and at the global level, including at the 2017 conference and through training events.

F. Ongoing activities in the energy statistics work programme of the Statistics Division

53. The annual collection of data on energy statistics continued to be an important element of the work of the Division (https://unstats.un.org/unsd/energy/). While data for most countries are collected directly by the Division, data for some groups of countries are obtained through data-sharing agreements with other organizations. The

data collection by the Division is now fully compliant with the recommendations (including definitions) set out in the International Recommendations for Energy Statistics. In addition, efforts have been made to harmonize the questionnaires and data collection procedures among the main agencies involved in the collection of data on energy statistics.

54. The *Energy Statistics Yearbook* covers data on the production, trade and consumption of energy (solids, liquids, gaseous fuels and electricity), as well as additional information, such as per capita consumption, graphs showing historical trends, and special tables on trade, renewables, waste, refinery capacity and selected energy resources. The *Yearbook* contains data from 266 countries and areas (including historical figures).

55. The Energy Statistics Database, which provides content for the *Energy Statistics Yearbook*, is published in electronic form and contains additional data, including information for 2016 for some countries.

56. The collected data on energy are provided in two additional annual publications, in which the data is presented in a way that is suitable for analytical purposes, namely, the *Energy Balances* series and the *Electricity Profiles* series.

57. The *Energy Balances* series cover data on production, trade, conversion and consumption for each fuel used, presented in the energy balance format compliant with the Recommendations. They cover data from 218 countries and areas.

58. The *Electricity Profiles* series cover data on production, trade and consumption of electricity, net installed capacity and thermal power plant input. They cover data from 244 countries and areas.

59. Starting in 2017, a new publication, namely, the *Energy Statistics Pocketbook*, has been introduced and serves to summarize the information on energy in a condensed, user-friendly format.

60. In addition, the monthly collection of energy statistics has continued to be carried out on a regular basis for both oil statistics, within the Joint Oil Data Initiative, and the production of selected energy products for the Monthly Bulletin of Statistics.

61. The Statistics Division will continue to issue the five above-mentioned outputs in print and electronic formats in the biennium 2018-2019.

62. Since the forty-fifth session of the Commission, the Division has organized two training workshops on energy statistics and has participated in trainings organized by the Joint Organizations Data Initiative. The Division will continue its technical assistance efforts in coming years, depending upon resources available.

63. The Division is also working on the development of online training courses on the International Recommendations for Energy Statistics and the Energy Statistics Compilers Manual and expects to complete the first set of courses in 2018.

III. Action required by the Statistical Commission

64. The Commission is invited to take note of the present report.

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Report of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics

Note by the Secretary-General

In accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2017/228 and past practices, the Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the report of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics, which is presented to the Statistical Commission for information. In its report, the Group describes its progress since its previous report to the Commission in 2015, including a new five-year strategic plan, its best practices in new covered industries and its continuing discussion of several cross-cutting issues, such as bundling and e-commerce. The Commission is invited to take note of the report.

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Report of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics

I. Introduction

1. In the late 1980s, the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics was established in response to a request from the Statistical Commission for assistance in developing service statistics. The first meeting, hosted by the Netherlands Statistical Office, was held in January 1987 in Voorburg, the Netherlands, from which the Group derives its name.

2. The Voorburg Group was not created to be simply another forum for exchange of information. Instead, it was to be a group of countries interested in and capable of carrying out developmental work between and during meetings, following well-established rules and a clear timetable. In fact, the purpose of the Group was to address issues related to the production of service statistics, including service product outputs and inputs, the estimation of the real product of service activities and price indices of service products and industries, as well as their implications for product and industry classification (Central Product Classification (CPC) and International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC)).

3. Over the years, the Group was successful in developing product and industrial classification and model surveys and discussing a wide range of topics, such as the information society, short-term indicators and international trade in services, to name only a few. In 2005, in response to concerns about the Group's broad agenda and wide participation, the Voorburg Bureau reviewed the focus and modalities of the Group and prepared a strategic vision paper describing the mandate, role and workplan for the future of the Group. The vision paper was presented at the thirty-sixth session of the Statistical Commission, held in March 2005, at which the mandate of the Voorburg Group was renewed, with a particular emphasis on the development of service producer price indices (SPPIs).

4. During the thirty-sixth session of the Statistical Commission, the Voorburg Group presented an updated strategic vision to guide future work that focused on the proper identification and definition of service industries, products and measures of turnover, combined with a coordinated effort to develop producer price indices for use as deflators to improve the measurement of service components of gross domestic product (GDP) at constant prices. Consequently, the Group focused its work on classification issues, output measures, and price indices.

5. In 2006, the Voorburg Group adopted a content development framework to ensure that its work was focused on the strategic vision and would be presented by a set of tangible outputs that would provide information to the larger official statistics community.

6. The Statistical Commission last took note of a report by the Voorburg Group during its forty-sixth session, in 2015.

7. The present report provides an update on the progress made by the Group in addressing best practices in service industry output statistics, service industry price statistics and service industry and product classifications. It also presents changes in the Group's operations for the future, as articulated in its strategic plan for 2017–2021.

II. Progress since 2014

8. In early 2017, the Voorburg Group published a new strategic plan that reflected the changing needs of the Group's members. The new plan is designed to guide the Group's efforts for at least the next five years. It describes the Group's mission, its vision, its five-year objectives and a detailed workplan. The mission continues to reflects the mandate given by the Statistical Commission, but is now more targeted, as follows:

(a) *Mission*. The mission of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics is to establish and maintain an internationally comparable methodology for measuring output and producer price indices for the services industries. The Group focuses on the development of concepts and methods, the sharing of best practices and the identification of classification needs. In so doing, the Group will be mindful of the diverse needs of its members and will continue to focus on the importance of expanding its knowledge base in line with rapid changes in services industries and product areas;

(b) *Vision*. The Voorburg Group is a premier source of guidance and best practices for the development of measures of output and producer price indices for services industries.

9. For most of the period under review, the Voorburg Group has followed its content development framework established in 2006, while working to update that framework to better align to the current needs and strategic direction of the Group. This ensured that the work of the Group was focused and would result in a set of tangible outputs that would provide information to the larger official statistics community.

10. Increasingly, the Voorburg Group has been tackling cross-cutting issues such as bundling of services, reselling of services, quality adjustment and use of alternative data sources that provide significant challenges in the measurement of the volume of services produced in an economy. Where practical solutions can be found, these are documented in guidance papers, or at least are summarized in issue papers to ensure the collective knowledge of the Group on an issue is not lost over time. The Voorburg Group works with other international groups and organizations to avoid duplication of effort while ensuring that concepts, frameworks and requirements are considered in sector and guidance papers.

11. In addressing new industries or topics, the Voorburg Group has adopted a series of mini-presentations of national experiences that are summarized into a sector presentation (industries) or guidance paper (cross-cutting issues) that details best practices. Cross-cutting topics are also covered through poster sessions, followed by a summary report. In addition to these topics, the Voorburg Group has continued to review areas of interest and need. A summary of activities by year since the previous progress report is set out below.

(a) **2015, Sydney:**

(i) The 2015 meeting included presentation and approval of sector papers for call centres, travel agency activities and specialized design activities and an issue paper on leasing of intellectual property. There were new mini-presentations for other reservation services and related activities, veterinary activities, office and administrative support activities, and organization of conventions and trade shows;

(ii) 2015 also saw cross-cutting topic discussions on issues and best practices concerning bundling of services, on the use of an industry versus product framework for measurement of particular services and the treatment of reselling of services. The Group also held its first structured poster session in which eight national statistical offices shared their experiences either on the use of administrative data or on country challenges in developing SPPIs;

(iii) Finally, the Group spent time discussing options for the future of the Voorburg Group, reviewing a paper written by the Group's leadership bureau and setting the stage for drafting of a new strategic plan;

(b) **2016, Zagreb:**

(i) The 2016 meeting included presentation and approval of sector papers for organization of conventions and trade shows and for veterinary activities (the latter covering only turnover/output). The Group also considered a new issue paper for office and administrative support activities. The Group also considered two guidance papers on bundling of services and an industry versus product framework, following up on the cross-cutting topics discussed at the 2015 meeting. There were new mini-presentations for activities auxiliary to financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding, and for motion picture, video and television programme production, sound recording and music publishing activities;

(ii) 2016 also saw a cross-cutting topic session on the use of time-based methods and the challenge of productivity for SPPIs and on experiences in starting measurement of services. For the second year, the Group held another highly successful structured poster session in which four national statistical offices presented posters related to the theme of initiating SPPIs or turnover/output statistics and five national statistical offices presented posters on the use of alternative data sources;

(iii) Finally, a large part of the 2016 meeting was spent reviewing and approving the new strategic plan of the Voorburg Group, which was formally presented to the membership at the meeting. Feedback was obtained and the plan was revised during the meeting with the basic contents approved and the co-chairs authorized to update and finalize the plan for posting on the Group's website and sharing with the Statistical Commission by the spring of 2017;

(iv) Related to this effort was the presentation and discussion of a new content development framework for use by the Group for the first time in preparation for the 2017 meeting;

(c) **2017, New Delhi:**

(i) The 2017 meeting included presentation and approval of a sector paper for activities auxiliary to financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding. The Group furthered its work on motion picture, video and television programme production, sound recording and music publishing activities with a specific discussion on the classification of streaming services. The Group also brought forward areas of change in telecommunications and engineering for a revision to the sector papers guiding the measurement of these two industries. In addition to the related mini-presentations on engineering, there were new mini-presentations for other financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding activities (e.g. investment banking);

(ii) 2017 also saw cross-cutting topic sessions on practical issues in the measurement of services stemming from e-commerce, including an overview by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on international work related to measuring the digital economy. The Voorburg Group also looked at issues related to globalization. The session included a presentation by OECD summarizing data needs for national accounts and the work completed to date. Delegates shared their practices in developing quality indicators for output and price data;

(iii) Finally, the Group reviewed its progress in following its strategic plan, including reports on task forces who worked throughout the year. The Group provided feedback on the new content development framework that was introduced for 2017. The Group approved criteria for work on cross-cutting topics and practices to ensure that Voorburg Group documentation remains relevant and up to date. The updated Voorburg Group website was presented, along with plans to develop a collaborative space online for participants to work between meetings.

12. The Voorburg Group has developed a considerable library of national experience in the development of turnover and price statistics for service industries since the institution of the content development framework. Overall, the Group has addressed 114 service industries as defined by revision 4 of ISIC, representing an addition of nine industries since the last progress report. A full list of industries is included in the annex to the present report. It should be noted that in recent years, for some of the industries only turnover statistics were studied owing to a lack of coverage for price statistics.

13. A task force presented a new content development framework for the Group, which had been tested in practice. It covers several new industry and output price issues to be looked at when analysing a specific area. Feedback from the group was generally positive; it had forced members to look across their national statistical office for collecting the necessary information, which was regarded as a valuable exercise. Minor adjustments in the content development framework will be made before the next meeting.

14. The Group maintains a website on which all its sector papers and related materials are stored for reference by interested parties (www.voorburggroup.org). The website is hosted by Statistics Canada and was redesigned in 2017 to introduce better search capability. A task force of Voorburg Group delegates collaborated to improve the function and usability of the website. Further enhancements are expected in the coming year.

15. As the Voorburg Group is dealing with more cross-cutting issues, there is a need to coordinate the work with frameworks and concepts developed by other international groups, while ensuring that the Group does not duplicate efforts. This means ensuring that internationally comparable methods to measure the services sector reflect changes in concepts and activities related to broader issues, including globalization and the impact of digitalization. One of the objectives of the Group is to strengthen its connections with other international groups. In tackling broader issues, the Voorburg Bureau has consulted with international organizations, including the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), OECD and Eurostat. The 2017 meeting included topics related to globalization and the digital economy to which the IMF and OECD contributed.

III. Future agenda

16. The tentative agenda for the thirty-third meeting of the Voorburg Group includes industry papers for data processing, hosting and related activities (ISIC 6311), covering measurement issues for output and prices with specific discussions on cloud computing. The Group will review sector papers for telecommunications and architectural and engineering activities and discuss a new sector paper on other financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding activities. The Group will produce and discuss an issue paper focusing on questions raised at the thirty-first and thirty-second meetings regarding motion picture, video and television programme production, and sound recording and music publishing activities (ISIC 591 and 592). The Group will also produce and discuss an issue paper on e-commerce based on shared experiences from the thirty-second meeting. Cross-cutting topics to be discussed at the next meeting include intermediaries in the provision of services, quality adjustment methods in a digital economy, export of services, and profiling and data collection of large complex enterprises.

17. Three task forces have been established to work on the issues set out below before the 2018 meeting:

(a) Further development of the Group's permanent website and communication platforms;

(b) Finalization of the content development framework presented at the 2017 meeting of the Group;

(c) Review of the issues and challenges in measuring wholesale trade that were summarized and presented in 2012 to determine if sufficient progress has been made to update guidance on the industry.

18. The Voorburg Group provided a set of recommendations to the Statistics Division for the upcoming revision of ISIC; the Group's secretary, John Murphy, shared the recommendations with the Expert Group on International Statistical Classifications. The Voorburg Group is a unique resource for advice on the content and structure of standard classifications because of its members' hands-on experience. The Group's workplan revisits and updates past work to incorporate market changes and developments.

IV. Action required by the Statistical Commission

19. The Commission is invited to take note of the report of the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics

Annex

Industries covered by the Voorburg Group on Service Statistics, 2006–2017

ISIC code	*Industry title*
3312	Repair of machinery
3313	Repair of electronic and optical equipment
3314	Repair of electrical equipment
3315	Repair of transport equipment (except motor vehicles)
3319	Repair of other equipment
3600	Water collection, treatment, and supply
3700	Sewerage
3811	Collection of non-hazardous waste
3812	Collection of hazardous waste
3821	Treatment and disposal of non-hazardous waste
3822	Treatment and disposal of hazardous waste
3830	Materials recovery
3900	Remediation activities and other waste management services
4520	Maintenance and repair of motor vehicles
462–469	Wholesale trade
4911	Passenger rail transport, interurban
4912	Freight rail transport
4923	Freight transport by road
5011	Sea and coastal passenger water transport
5012	Sea and coastal freight water transport
5021	Inland passenger water transport
5022	Inland freight water transport
5110	Passenger air transport
5120	Freight air transport
5210	Warehousing and storage
5221	Service activities incidental to land transportation
5222	Service activities incidental to water transportation

ISIC code	*Industry title*
5223	Service activities incidental to air transportation
5224	Cargo handling
5229	Other transportation support activities
5310	Postal activities
5320	Courier activities
5510	Short term accommodation activities
5520	Camping grounds, recreational vehicle parks and trailer parks
5590	Other accommodation
5610	Restaurants and mobile food service activities
5621	Event catering
5629	Other food service activities
5630	Beverage serving activities
5811	Book publishing
5812	Publishing of directories and mailing lists
5813	Publishing of newspapers, journals and periodicals
5819	Other publishing activities
5820	Software publishing
5910	Motion picture, video and television programme activities
5920	Sound recording and music publishing activities
6010	Radio broadcasting
6020	Television programming and broadcasting activities
6110	Wired telecommunications activities
6120	Wireless telecommunication activities
6130	Satellite telecommunications activities
6190	Other telecommunications activities
6201	Computer programming activities
6202	Computer consultancy and computer facilities management services
6209	Other information technology and computer service activities
6311	Data processing, hosting and related activities

ISIC code	*Industry title*
6312	Web portals
6411	Central banking
6419	Other monetary intermediation
6492	Other credit granting
6499	Other financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding activities, n.e.c.
6512	Non-life insurance
6520	Reinsurance
6610	Activities auxiliary to financial service activities, except insurance and pension funding
6810	Real estate activities with own or leased property
6820	Real estate activities on a fee or contract basis
6910	Legal activities
6920	Accounting, bookkeeping and auditing activities; tax consultancy
7020	Management consultancy activities
7110	Architecture and engineering activities and related technical consultancy
7120	Technical testing and analysis
7210	Research and experimental development on natural sciences and engineering
7220	Research and experimental development on social sciences and humanities
7310	Advertising
7320	Market research and public opinion polling
7410	Specialized design services
7500	Veterinary activities
7710	Renting and leasing of motor vehicles
7721	Renting and leasing of recreational and sports goods
7722	Renting of video tapes and disks
7729	Renting and leasing of other personal and household goods
7730	Renting and leasing of other machinery, equipment and tangible goods

ISIC code	*Industry title*
7740	Leasing of intellectual property and similar products, except copyrighted works
7810	Activities of employment placement agencies
7820	Temporary employment agency activities
7830	Other human resources provision
7911	Travel agency activities
7999	Other reservation service and related activities
8010	Private security activities
8020	Security systems service activities
8030	Investigation activities
8110	Combined facilities support activities
8121	General cleaning of buildings
8129	Other building and industrial cleaning activities
8130	Landscape care and maintenance service activities
8210	Office administrative and support activities
8220	Activities of call centres
8230	Organization of conventions and trade shows
8610	Hospital activities
8620	Medical and dental practice activities
8690	Other human health activities
9000	Creative, arts and entertainment activities
9101	Library and archives activities
9102	Museums activities and operation of historical sites and buildings
9103	Botanical and zoological gardens and nature reserves activities
9311	Operation of sports facilities
9312	Activities of sports clubs
9319	Other sports activities
9521	Repair of consumer electronics
9522	Repair of household appliances and home and garden equipment
9523	Repair of footwear and leather goods

ISIC code	*Industry title*
9524	Repair of furniture and home furnishings
9529	Repair of other personal and household goods